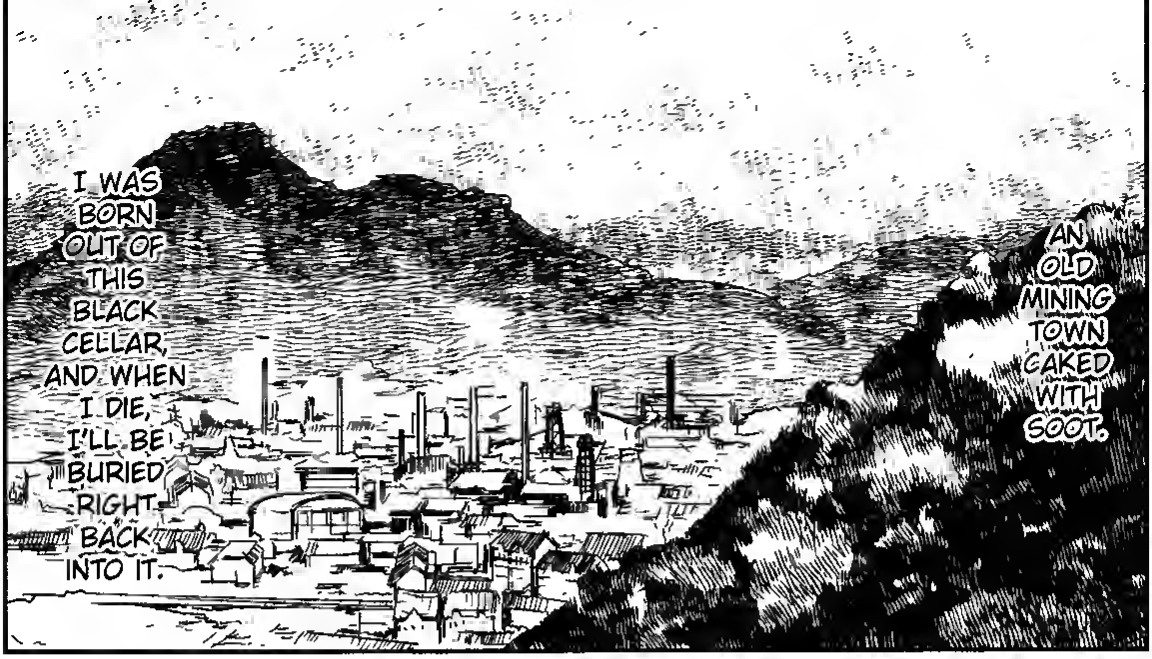

I WAS BORN OUT OF THIS BLACK CELLAR, AND WHEN I DIE, I'LL BE BURIED RIGHT BACK INTO IT.
AN OLD MINING TOWN CAKED WITH SOOT.

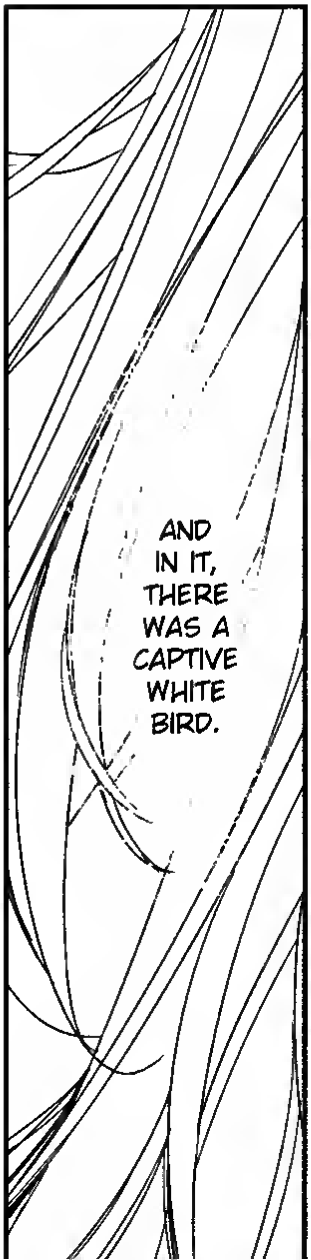
William's Coal Mine
I COULDN'T STAND IT.
I THOUGHT THAT THE HUMANS OF THIS TOWN WERE SHADOWS THAT SPILLED OUT OF A HOLE; THEY'D ALL SHARE THAT FATE.

I STRAYED FROM MY BORING PALS.

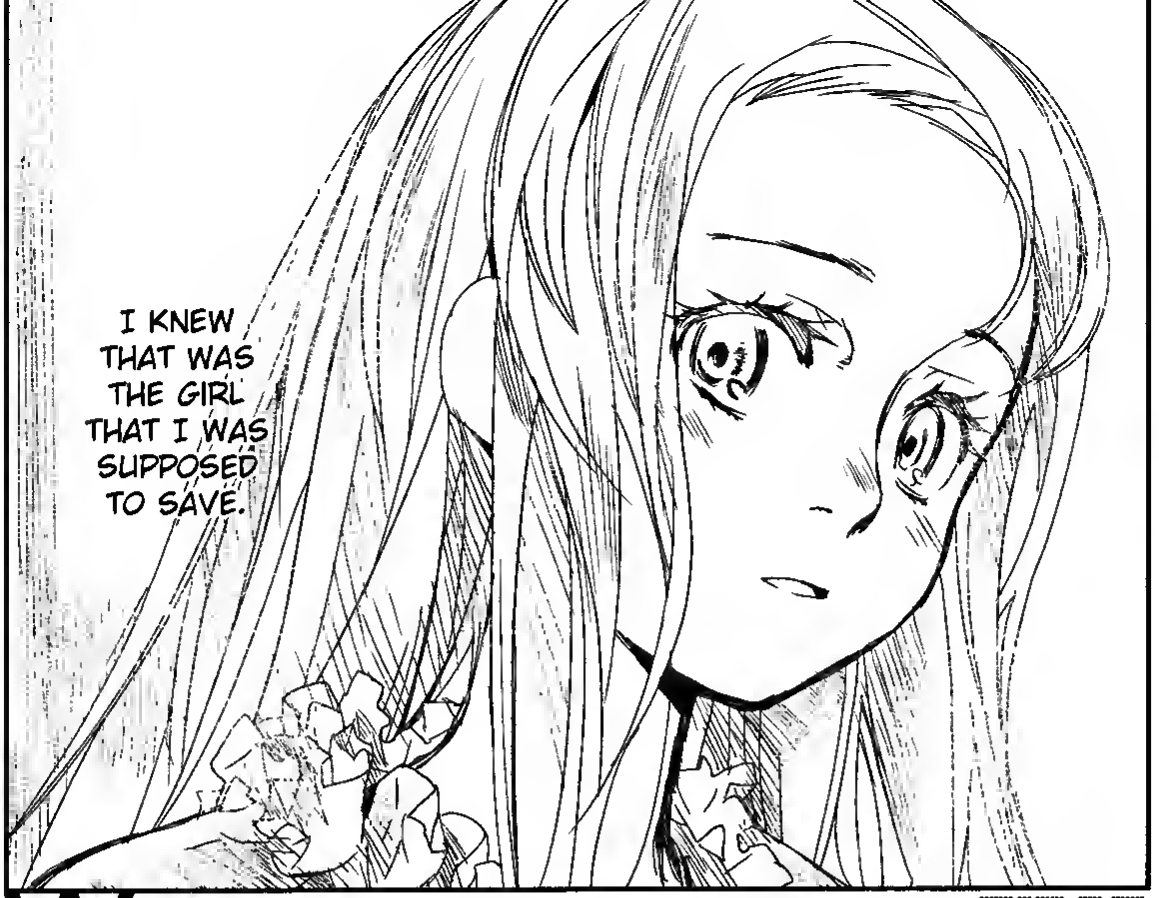
AND I MADE LINGERING ROUNDS ABOUT A TOWN LIKE THE BOTTOM OF A CUP.

FROM THE HOUSE WITH THE BLUE BALCONY ON THE WAY TO CHURCH.
FROM WENDY'S HOUSE, SEEMINGLY EVERY NIGHT, I COULD HEAR A SMALL, SOBBING VOICE. I KEPT PLYING MY ROUTE UNDER ITS EAVES.

THEN, ONE SABBATH MORNING...


AND IN IT, THERE WAS A CAPTIVE WHITE BIRD.

IT WAS JUST LIKE THE WINDOW OF A BOAT SHIPWRECKED IN WHITE FOG BELCHED FROM THE MOUNTAINS.



WALK WIT ME

FIRST PART

Jason Hook

LAYOFF NOTICE
THE FIRST TIME WE MET
WAS WELL BEFORE THAT MORNING.
THE DAY A THIRD OF THE ANTS LOST THEIR FOOD MONEY.
BY A SUNSET WITH A REMARKABLY LARGE SUN.
THAT DAY THEIR BACKS WERE SCORCHED
I STARED...
AT WENDY.

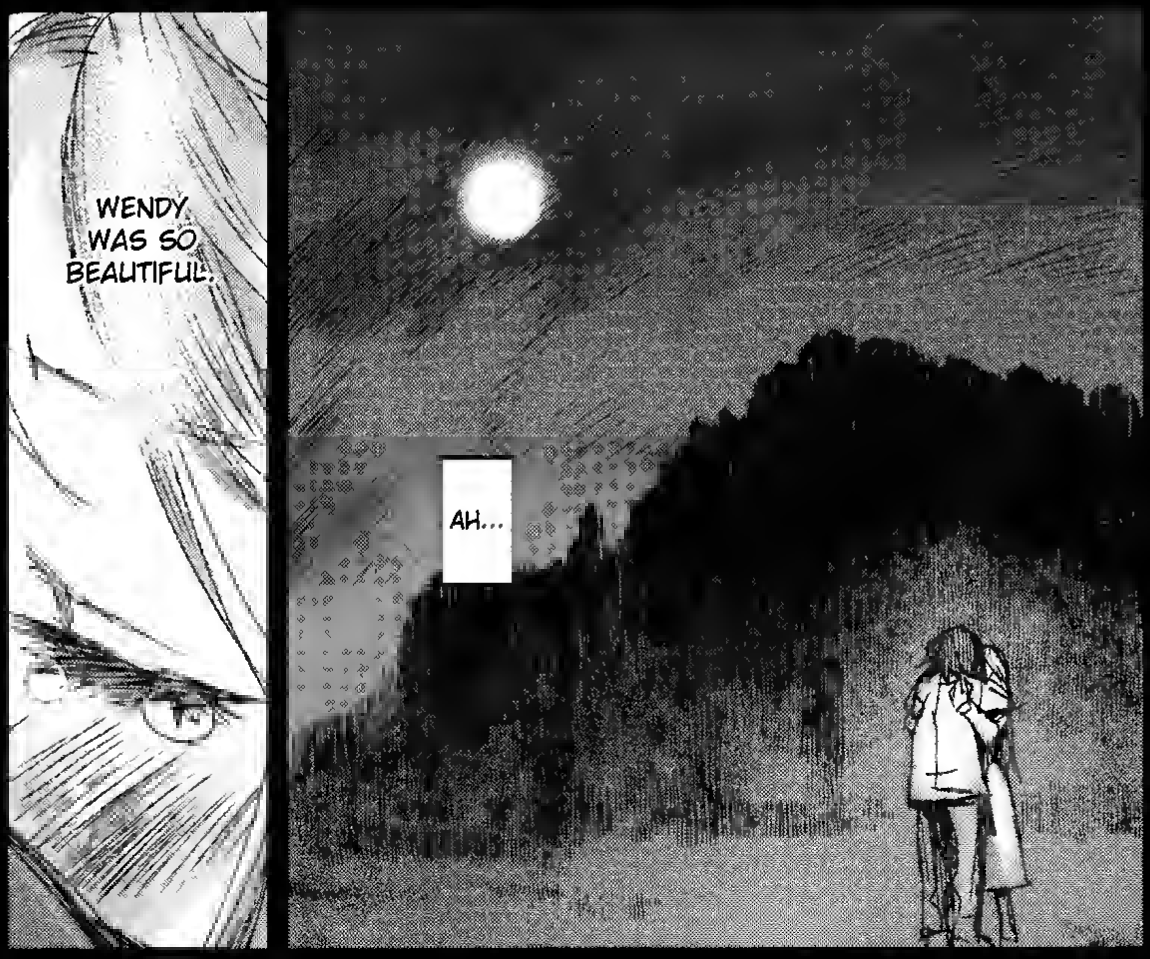
YELLED AT BY HER MOTHER ON THE BICYCLE. SHE WAS LEFT BEHIND.

SHE'D BECOME SMALL, LIKE AN EGG.
SHE WAS PITIFULLY COLLAPSED IN TEARY HELPLESSNESS.
HEY.
I'LL TAKE YOU HOME.
WHO ARE YOU?
I'M MARLY.
MUDDY MARLY.

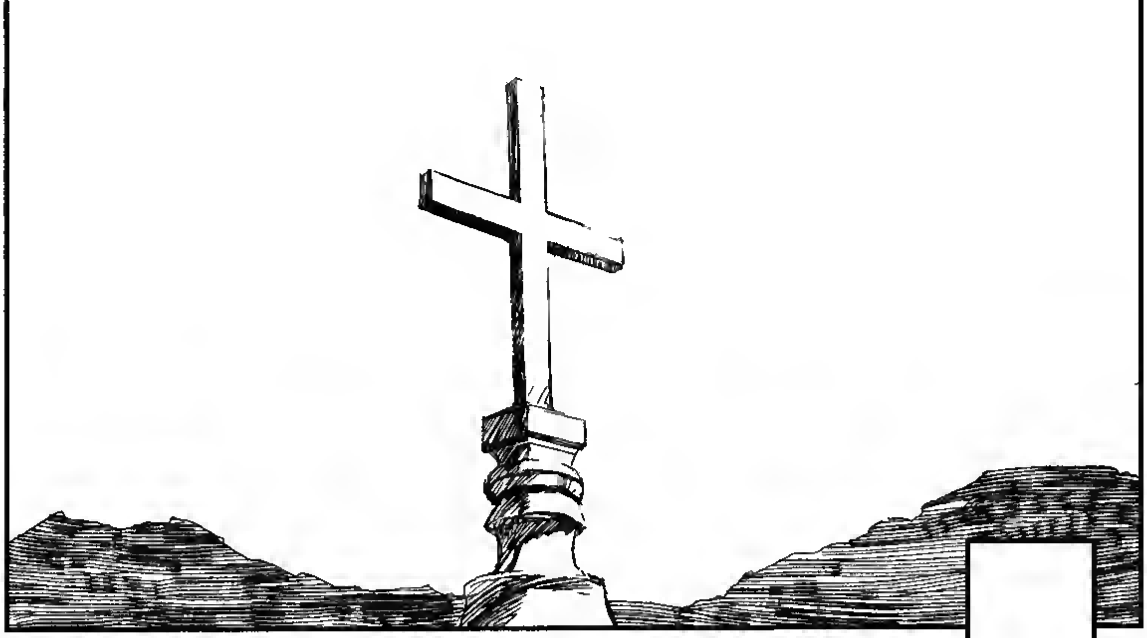
WENDY.
OKAY, WENDY, CHEER UP.
CRYING LIKE THAT PUTS YOUR BEAUTIFUL FACE TO WASTE.
...YOU KNOW, MARLY, YOU'RE NICER THAN MAMA.
WELL, GROWN-UPS ARE ALL SCRAP METAL.

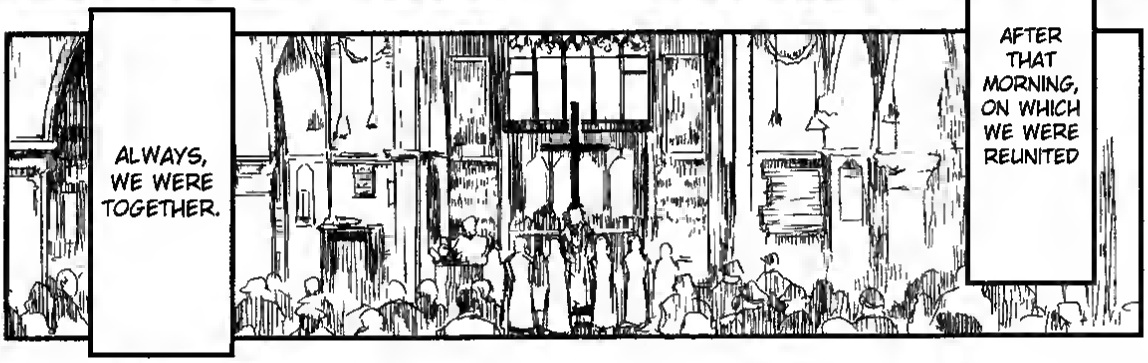
IT LOOKS LIKE THE TOWN IS SINKING IN THE MOUN-TAINS' SHADOW.
TAKE A LOOK.
BEFORE LONG, THEY'LL COME TO THE SURFACE, AND THIS WILL BE NO MORE.
THE GROWN-UPS IN TOWN SWALLOW LIES OF COAL TAR, LITTLE BY LITTLE. EVERY TIME THEY GO UNDER
WHEN THE SHADOW IS PULLED AWAY, TOMORROW WILL COME, SAME AS ALWAYS.
...MAMA!

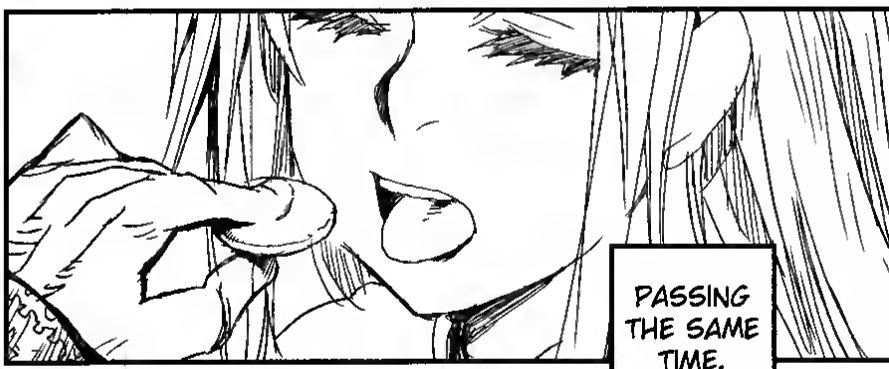
I'M SORRY. I SCARED YOU—
MARLY.
...PLEASE.
HELP ME...!
COME HERE. LIFT YOUR FACE. WALK WITH ME.
OKAY.
I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A KISS.

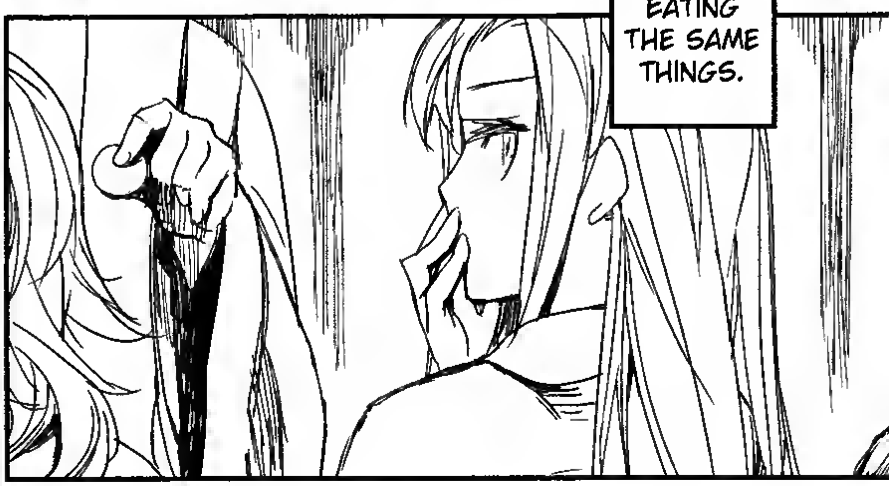

WENDY WAS SO BEAUTIFUL.
AH...

BUT...
THIS GIRL'S MOTHER...
WAS SO CRUEL A WOMAN.
SHE TUGGED LITTLE WEN'S ARM AND CARRIED HER AWAY.
THIS TOWN— THIS WORLD, THIS THING GOD MADE, IS AN AMATEUR, SOOT-CAKED, RAMSHAKLE CREATION.




ALWAYS, WE WERE TOGETHER.
AFTER THAT MORNING, ON WHICH WE WERE REUNITED

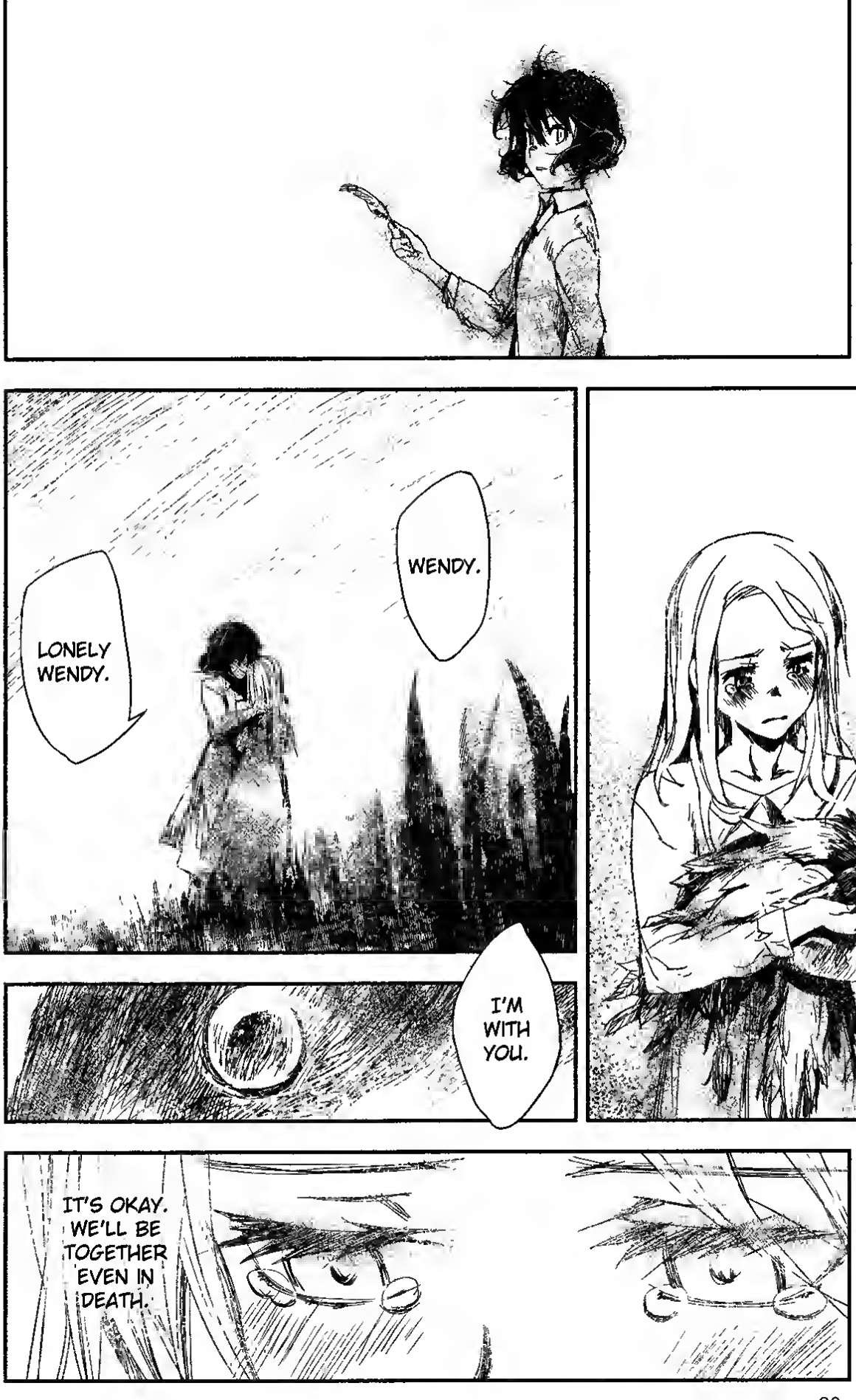

PASSING THE SAME TIME. EATING THE SAME THINGS.



WE SHARED EVEN THE BODY OF CHRIST BETWEEN US.

HE...
HASN'T STOPPED BREATHING.
HEY, MARLY...
YEAH?
HE HAD WINGS, HE COULD FLY THROUGH THE SKY, AND HE STILL COULDN'T GET AWAY.
IT'S TOO FAR FROM THE SKY HERE.
LET'S BURY HIM AT OUR ALTAR.

YOU CAN'T SEE YOUR BALCONY FROM HERE, HUH, WENDY?
...SO, I HEAR THE TUNNEL IN THE EAST MOUNTAIN LEADS OUTSIDE TOWN.
THEY SAY THERE'S A LAKE AND EVEN WATERFOWL.


WENDY.
LONELY WENDY.
I'M WITH YOU.
IT'S OKAY. WE'LL BE TOGETHER EVEN IN DEATH.

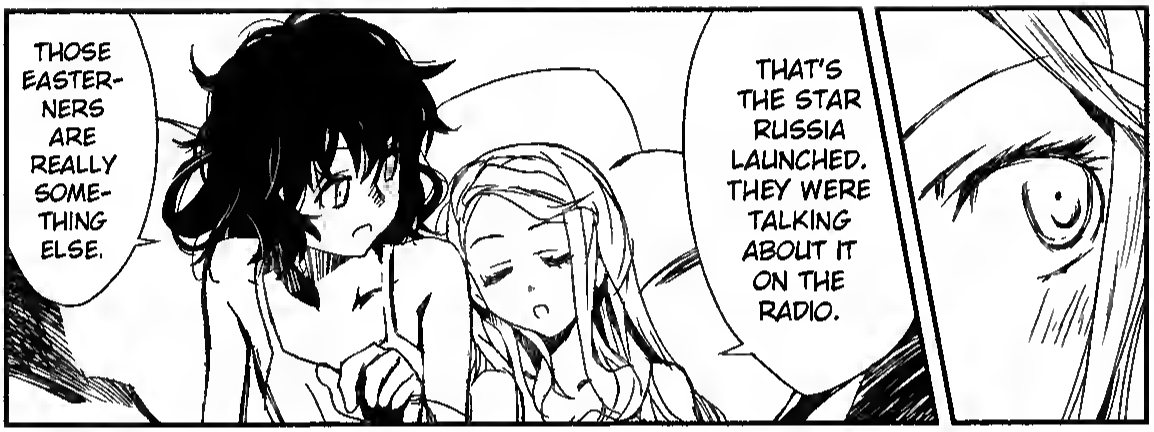
I'M SURE WHOEVER MADE THIS WORLD WAS JUST A BUM.
COAL AND IRON AND BONE. NOT AT ALL WONDERFUL.
THE REAL GOD IS INSIDE OF US.

"My heart beats with your blood."
"Wendy, beautiful like a golden moon, knowing no adulteration."
"Marly, overflowing with courage and freedom, like a seed on the wind."

"I pledge
to you,
who is now
within me,
my loyalty
and faith."

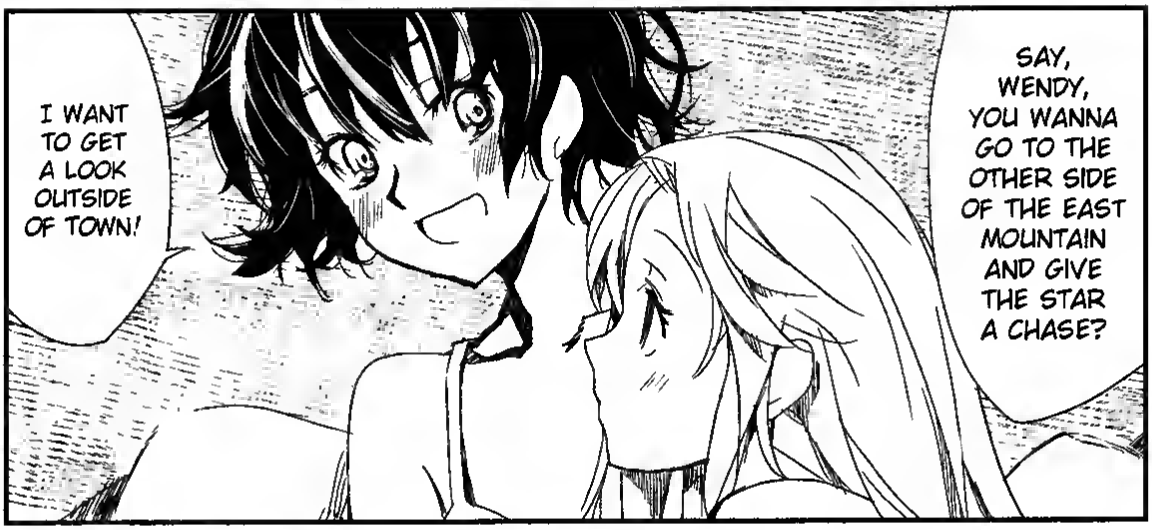
HEY, MARLY. LET'S GET ONE COFFIN FOR THE TWO OF US.
THAT WAY, EVEN IN THE GRAVE, WE CAN ALWAYS LAY ON EACH OTHER.
YEAH, THAT'S GOOD.
WE'LL MAKE SURE TO DO THAT.
WENDY, LOOK AT THAT.
A STAR IS FAL-LING!

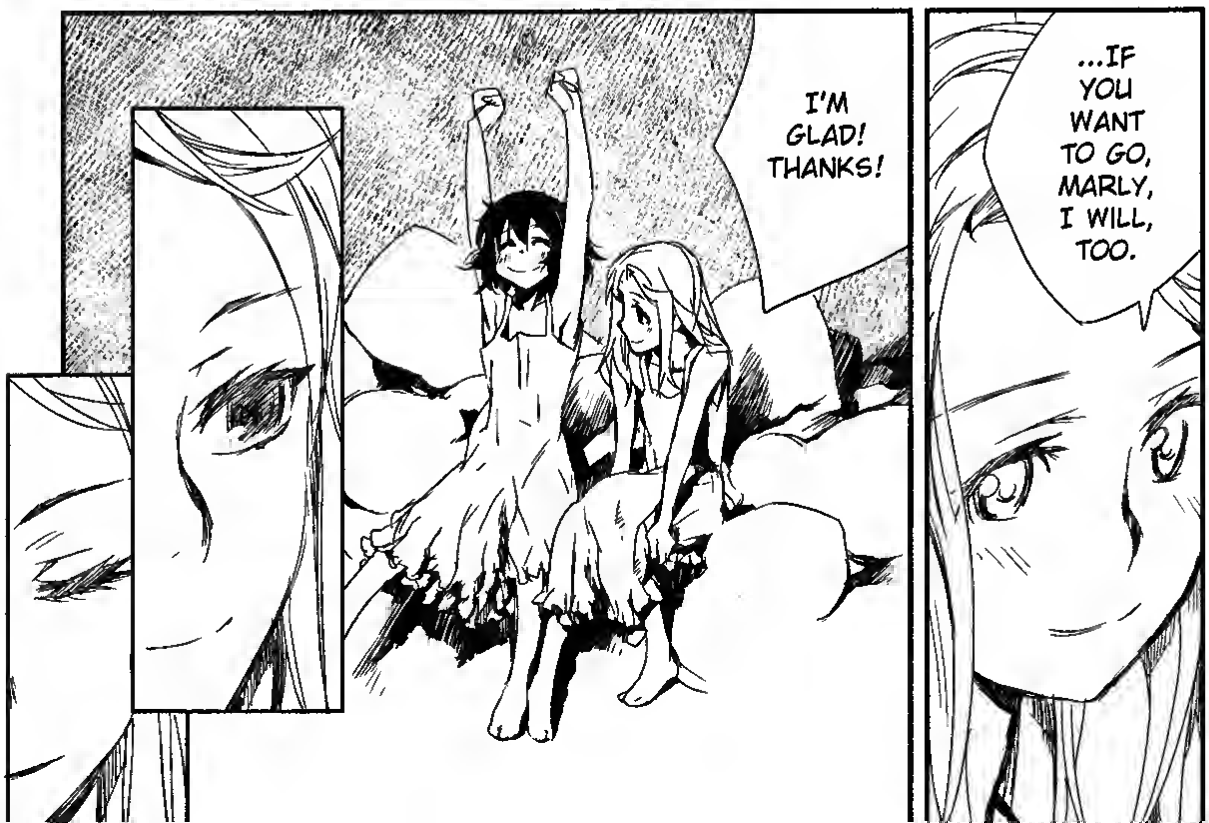
HOW FAR AWAY!
AW... IT'S ALREADY GONE TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN.

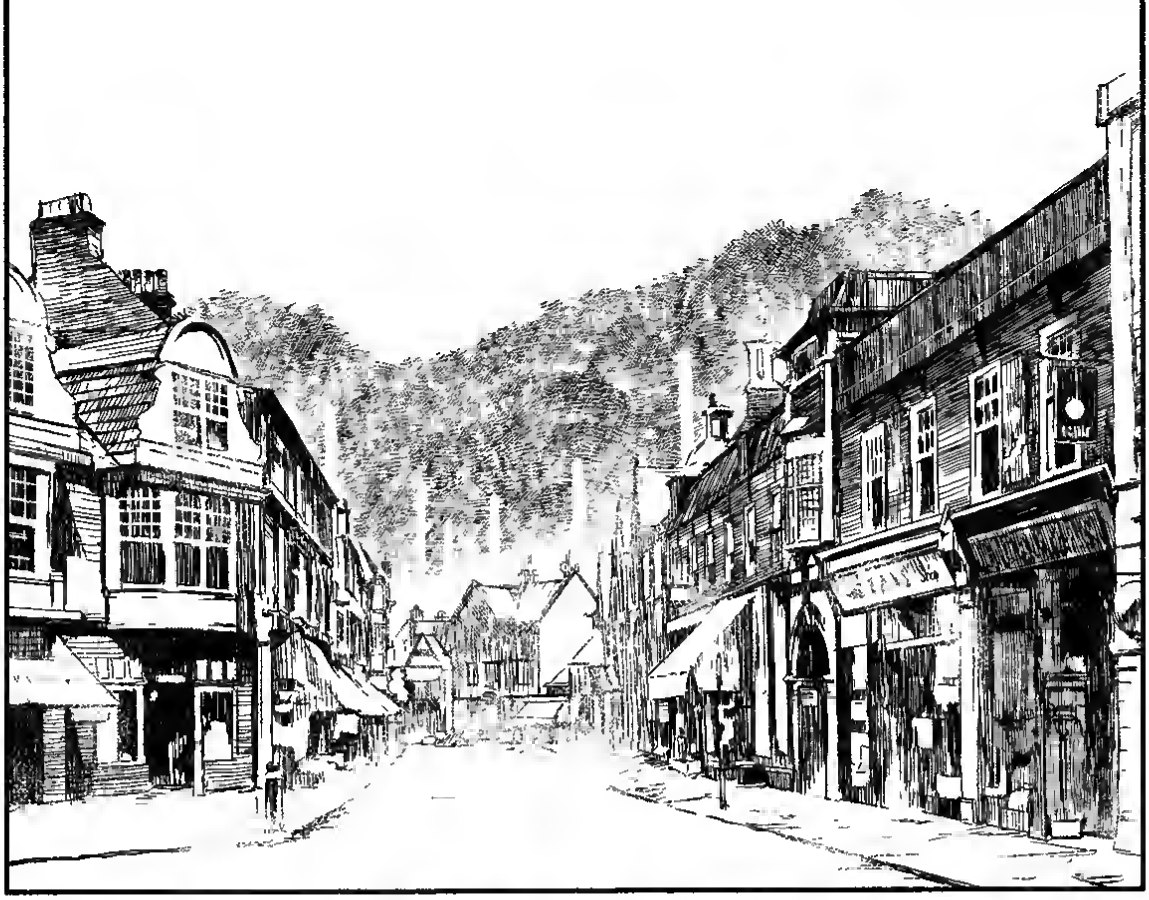

THOSE EASTER-NERS ARE REALLY SOME-THING ELSE.
THAT'S THE STAR RUSSIA LAUNCHED. THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT IT ON THE RADIO.

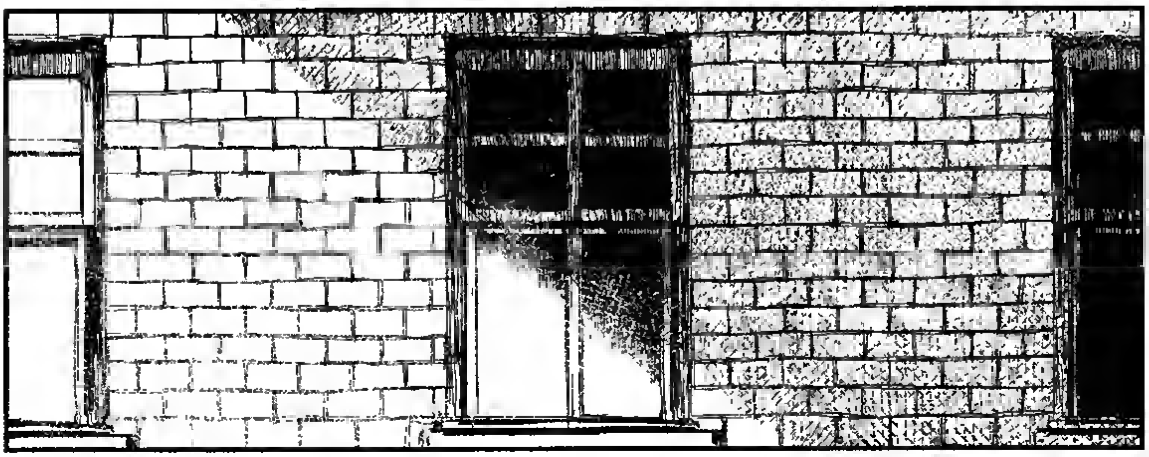
YOU DON'T SAY... WELL, THEY'RE A LOT MORE CLEVER THAN THE GROWN-UPS IN TOWN WHO WORSHIP A CROSS.
YOU KNOW, THEY SAY COMMUNISTS DON'T BELEIVE IN GOD. I HEAR THEY GO AROUND TEARING DOWN AAAAALL THE CHURCHES.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY THEY CAN MAKE STARS FLY.


I WANT TO GET A LOOK OUTSIDE OF TOWN!
SAY, WENDY, YOU WANNA GO TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EAST MOUNTAIN AND GIVE THE STAR A CHASE?


I'M GLAD! THANKS!
...IF YOU WANT TO GO, MARLY, I WILL, TOO.



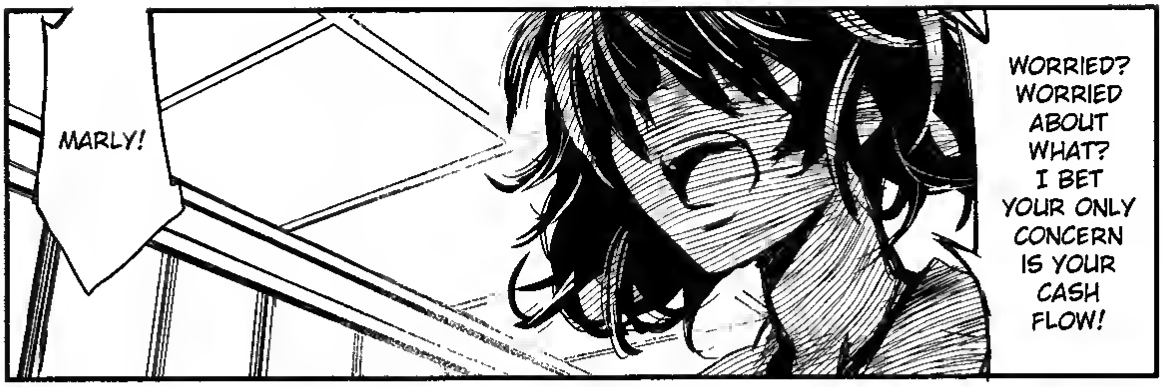


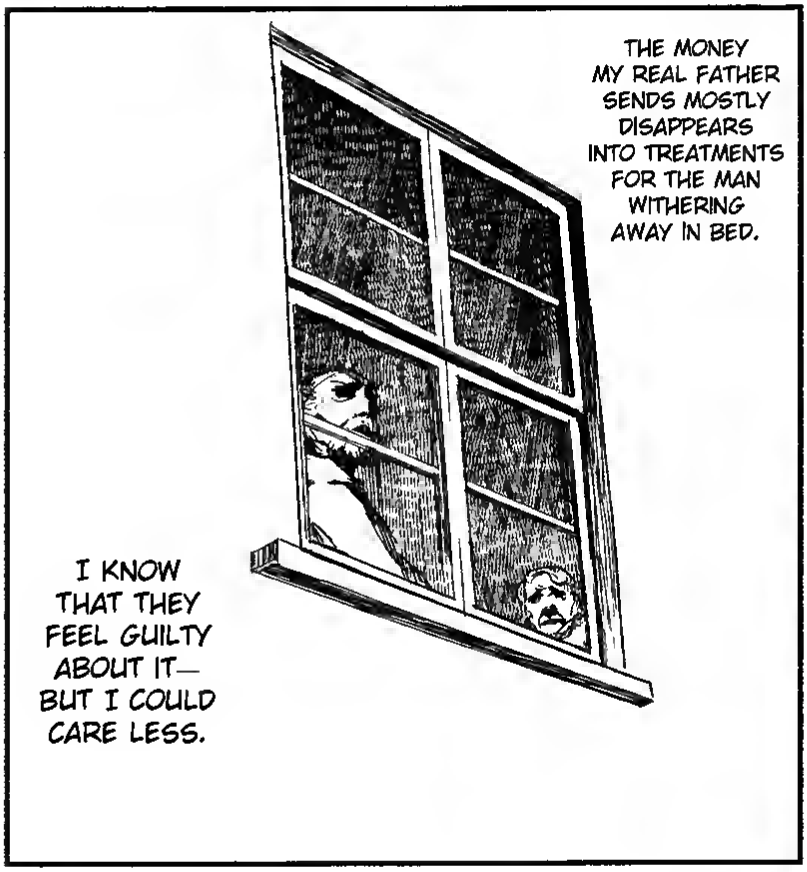
MARLY, ARE YOU GOING OUT? WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?
RUSS SATELLITE CIRCLING EARTH
First 'Moon' Sent 560 Miles High
Polish Capital Swept by Riots
PITT BEATS IKOJANS 20 TO 14

YOUR FATHER IS QUESTION-ING YOU, MAY!

WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHERE?

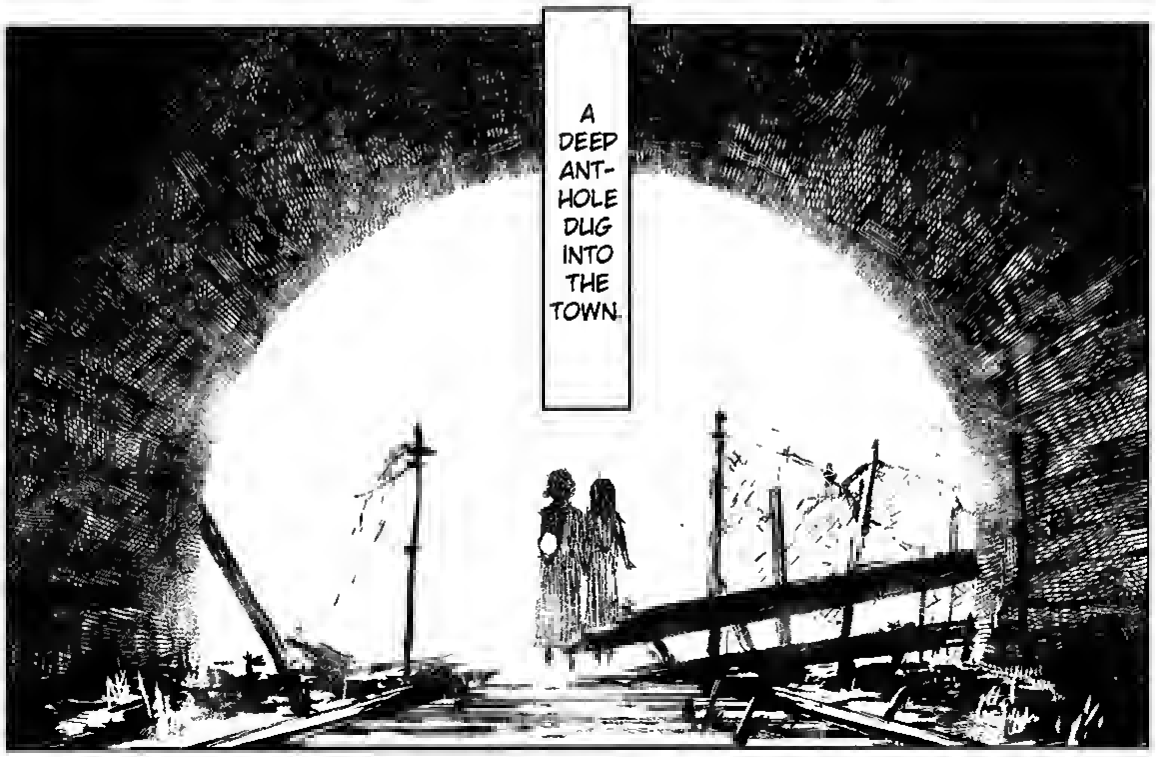
THE WORLD TODAY IS A DANGEROUS PLACE. YOUR MOTHER IS WORRIED, AS WELL.




THE MONEY MY REAL FATHER SENDS MOSTLY DISAPPEARS INTO TREATMENTS FOR THE MAN WITHERING AWAY IN BED.
I KNOW THAT THEY FEEL GUILTY ABOUT IT— BUT I COULD CARE LESS.

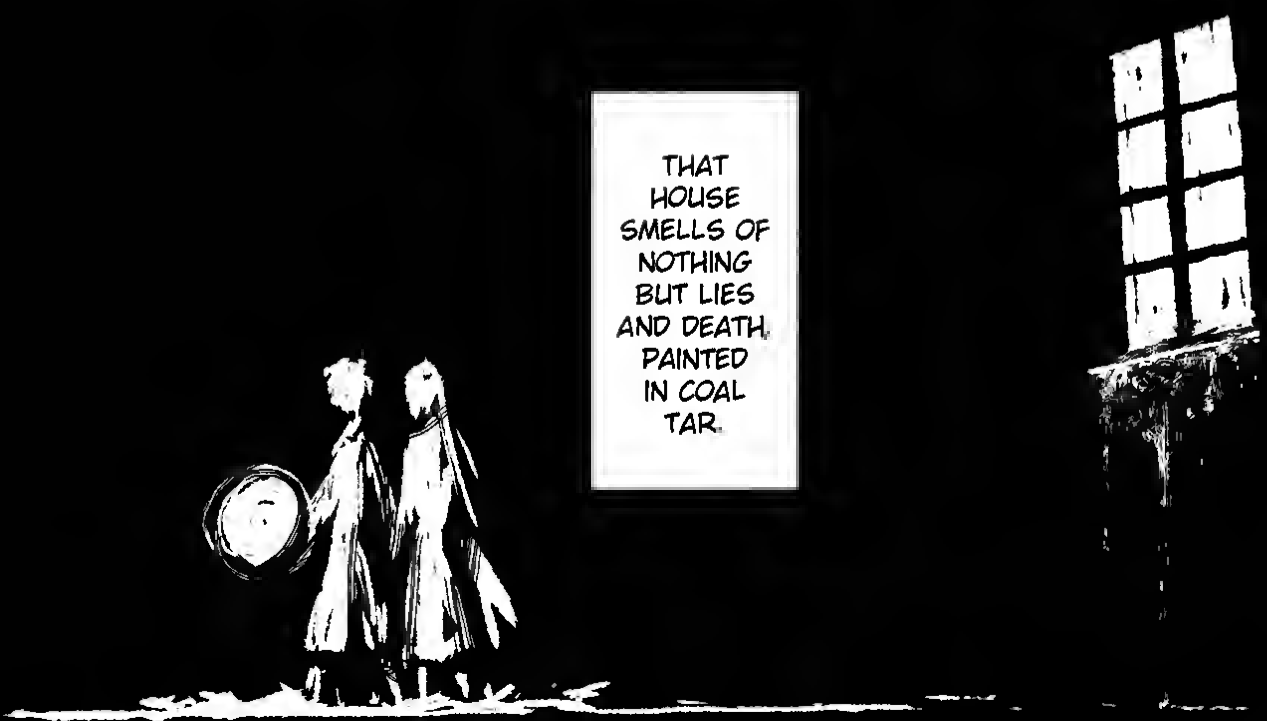
I WAS SIMPLY FED UP WITH THE THINGS PRESSING DOWN ON THIS HOUSE, THIS STREET, THIS TOWN, AND I JUST WANTED TO START RUNNING.

I WAS BEING DRIVEN VAGUELY ON BY SOMETHING AT MY BACK.

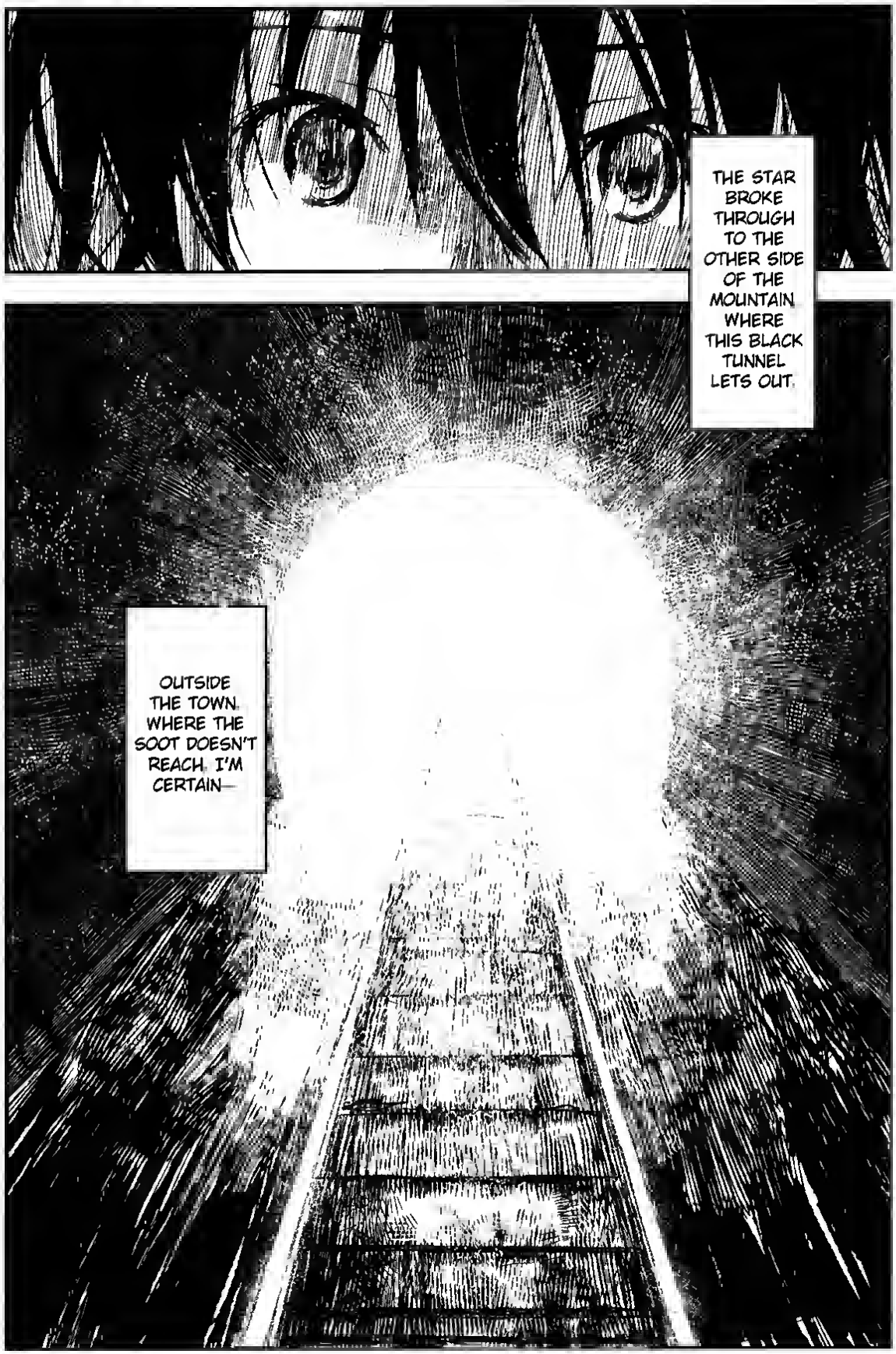

A DEEP ANT-HOLE DUG INTO THE TOWN.

A FOSTER FATHER TOUTING THE PRIDE OF A MAN BORN IN THIS TOWN AND ACTING TOUGH.
WAVING A HAND THAT CAN'T HOLD EVEN A SPOON FOR TUBER-CULOSIS AND THE BLACK LUNG.
LUNGS PACKED BLACK BY A LIFE IN THE MINE.

A FOSTER MOTHER WITH NEVER ANYTHING BUT SERVILITY FOR SUCH AN IMBECILE OF A MAN.


THAT HOUSE SMELLS OF NOTHING BUT LIES AND DEATH, PAINTED IN COAL TAR.

GUILELESS, BEAUTIFUL WENDY. TOGETHER WITH THIS GIRL, I'M GOING TO SEE THE WORLD OUTSIDE.
BUT I HAVE WENDY.


THE STAR BROKE THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN WHERE THIS BLACK TUNNEL LETS OUT.
OUTSIDE THE TOWN. WHERE THE SOOT DOESN'T REACH. I'M CERTAIN—

WALK WIT ME: FIRST PART

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